

older five times the premium for a younger person. Now, let's look at, say, a modest income of a 21-year-old of \$27,000 a year. They will actually pay \$250 less for a policy that will cover less. But that is okay, I guess, sort of, maybe.

But for a 64-year-old earning the same amount of money—and there are 64-year-olds out there still working who can't get Medicare yet and don't have a big retirement fund—they are still working for modest wages of \$27,000 a year, they will see their healthcare costs go from \$1,700 a year to \$14,600. So a 64-year-old American working person with an income of \$27,000 would have a premium of \$14,600. Now, how is that going to work? How is that going to work? More than half of their income would go to pay for a health insurance plan. They have put a target square on those millions of people, and that is absolutely outrageous.

This bill is tax cuts very thinly disguised as the American Health Care Act. The cuts are pretty astounding. If you earn \$700,000 a year, you will get a \$37,000 tax cut. Now, those people are really hurting. Those people at \$700,000 a year are worried about their health insurance. No, not so much. They probably get it for free through their corporate connections, or whatever. And even if they did, with \$772,000, they can afford the increase with a \$37,000 tax break.

But then how about the most privileged of the privileged of the privileged, those in the top 1 percent whose income averages \$4 million a year? They get a tax cut of \$207,000 a year under this bill. This bill is tax cuts disguised as an excuse for a replacement for the ACA.

There are a few other tax cuts, again, really deserving and needy folks—the pharmaceutical industry, \$25 billion, and the medical device industry, \$20 billion. And health insurance companies exempt from antitrust law can, once again, pay their CEOs \$5 million or \$10 million a year and take a full tax deduction, which under current law they can't.

So here it is, the goodie bag: Tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, tax cuts for the pharmaceutical industry, health insurance industry, medical device manufacturers; and, for the rest of America, the booby prize, which is healthcare plans that cover less and cost a lot more.

Oh, and then a couple of years out, 14 million people will be cut off of Medicaid.

These are really expensive tax cuts, and they have got to be paid for. The Republicans are fiscally responsible. They are going to pay for the tax cuts for people who earn \$1 million a year, they are going to pay for the tax cuts for the pharmaceutical industry, but they have to screw a hell of a lot of people to do it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to refrain from using vulgarity.

#### RECOGNIZING RESIGNATION OF MUSTAFA ALI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCEACHIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Mustafa Ali's 24 years of service to the health and wellness of the American people.

On March 7, Mr. Ali sent his resignation to Administrator Scott Pruitt. He resigned from his post as the leader of the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice program.

For more than 2 decades, Mr. Ali led our Nation's leaders on environmental justice in their search for equalizing the playing field for vulnerable communities that have been victims of actions that threaten their public health and the quality of their air, water, and land.

In his letter, Mr. Ali said, in part:

Communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous populations are still struggling to receive equal protections before the law.

These communities, both rural and urban, often live in areas with toxic levels of air pollution, crumbling or nonexistent water and sewer infrastructure, lead in their drinking water, brownfields from vacant former industrial and commercial sites, Superfund and other hazardous waste sites, as well as other sources of exposures to pollutants.

Despite the many challenges we face regarding the impacts of pollution and a changing climate, we have just as many effective tools and programs, with long track records of assisting vulnerable communities in meeting their goals of improving public health and enhancing the environmental quality of their local communities.

Mr. Ali's resignation is a signal for me. In my eyes, a longtime soldier in the fight to level the playing field for all Americans to live in a clean environment left the Environmental Protection Agency because it was no longer welcoming for individuals who want to work with facts.

As we await the President's fiscal year 2018 budget, we need to remember how impactful Environmental Justice programs are to our constituents' health. Flint is one of the most salient examples of what can happen when environmental justice watchdogs are not empowered to do their good work.

#### OBAMACARE FAILED TO MEET ITS GOALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because ObamaCare, though well intentioned, has failed to meet its own goals and promises.

There is a lot of passion on both sides of the aisle, I know. I just sat through 27 hours of debate in the Energy and Commerce Committee last week. It is clear that Republicans and Democrats have shared goals when it comes to health care. We want lower premiums,

more choices, high-quality health care, the best in the world. But ObamaCare did not get us there. And if we continue on the current path, health care in this country is only going to get worse.

Premiums this last year alone have risen, on average, across this country by 25 percent. One out of three counties only has one plan available to them. Networks are collapsing.

That is why we are working to repeal and replace ObamaCare. We are committed to creating a better healthcare future for every person in America. No back-room deals, no ramming through bills no one has had time to read, and no surprises.

Every step of the way, we want to hear from you, the American people. Visit [readthebill.gov](http://readthebill.gov) and give us your feedback. Health care should be an open, transparent process through regular order, and that is exactly what we are doing with the American Health Care Act.

#### OPPOSING GOP REPEAL BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to express my opposition to the GOP healthcare bill.

On Monday, we received from the CBO a report that the House repeal bill will increase the number of uninsured Americans by 24 million in 2026. Fifty-two million Americans will be uninsured in 2026, which is more than ever before, and definitely more than the Affordable Care Act.

The intentions here are clear. The bill's drafters are choosing to ration care for the elderly and the working class to fund tax cuts for the Nation's highest earners.

Under the GOP bill, a 64-year-old, with an income of \$26,000, will have to pay a net of \$12,900 more each year for her coverage than she currently does. In addition to the disproportionate harm that this bill will do to seniors, it will also accelerate the insolvency of the Medicare trust fund by 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, the GOP plan cuts \$880 billion from projected Medicaid spending over the next decade, while providing almost \$600 billion in tax cuts to the wealthy and to corporations. Sixty-four percent of the tax cuts would go to millionaires and billionaires, while an additional 20 percent would go to those making between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Mr. Speaker, less than 1 percent of my constituents make more than \$200,000, so it would be irresponsible of me not to voice my concern for a bill that contradicts the interests of my constituents so blatantly.

When I first got a copy of the bill less than 2 days before we marked it up in the Ways and Means Committee, I was left wondering if the bill was written to address our Nation's healthcare challenges or just to relieve the wealthy few of their tax obligations.

The drafters of this bill made the disappointing choice to favor value tested

and failed trickle-down economics over investing in a stronger, healthier America. Large numbers of unhealthy and uninsured Americans are not reflective of the governing bodies that make good choices.

The Republican health plan directly slashes funding for people with disabilities by \$12 billion, cutting the program that helps people live in their communities and reach their full potential.

□ 1045

I represent a historically underserved constituency in Alabama's Seventh Congressional District. The median income in my district is less than \$34,000. The majority of the health providers in my district have a patient population that is disproportionately dependent on Medicare and Medicaid and is uninsured. These healthcare providers cannot withstand caps to Medicaid or increases in their uninsured population. If this bill is implemented without substantial changes, rural health care will be lost and rural lives will be at risk.

In my district, I have met constituents who have weekly made choices between whether to buy medicine or to put food on the table. I have a pediatrician in my district in Birmingham who will stop what she is doing to track down patients newly infected with STDs so they do not transmit it.

In States with so many high rates of STDs in this country, every attempt to curb the spread of disease is critical. The GOP bill guts the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which helps community doctors provide preventative care and reduce the threat of public health crises.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, my office has received over 600 emails from constituents about health care. Many shared positive stories about the Affordable Care Act. Others, particularly those from low-income areas, fall in that gap, that Medicaid gap; and the State of Alabama, like so many Republican-led States, did not choose to expand Medicaid.

Unfortunately, the GOP health bill is not the answer. This bill will take Medicaid away from America's children, working parents, and seniors in nursing homes. By 2026, nearly 30 percent of Americans aged 50 to 64 earning \$30,000 will be uninsured. Surely, Mr. Speaker, this is not what this body intended.

This bill is not only morally unsound, but fiscally irresponsible, and I urge my colleagues to vote "no" for the GOP repeal bill.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at noon.

#### PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney, First and Calvary Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Missouri, offered the following prayer:

God, You are never far, but the busyness of each day makes You feel distant. Inner barricades block Your guidance—fears haunt us, worries entangle our minds, and pressures cast shadows upon our hearts. Keep these anxieties of life from overwhelming us.

Give us victory over pride so that our common humanity may provoke new inroads of compassion to sympathize more deeply with those in need.

Give us victory over stubbornness. Replace the grudges that hinder our collaboration with forgiveness that opens minds to new possibilities.

Give us victory from the stain of lustful sins. Keep us on the straight and narrow path. Cleanse and purify our hearts by the inspiration of Your holy spirit.

O God, give these Members of Congress a courageous perseverance, an unshakeable integrity, a spirit that cannot be broken. Secure the faith of this House, thereby securing the heritage and the future of America.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RUIZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING REVEREND DR. ANDREW CHANEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LONG) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, today I have the honor of introducing my friend Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney.

Reverend Chaney is a third-generation minister. He serves as the senior minister at the historic First and Calvary Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Missouri, a church that is a special place to my family. Reverend Chaney serves as an important spiritual voice for me and the Springfield community.

Congress has a longstanding tradition of beginning each session with a prayer. I am privileged and honored to have the opportunity today to welcome Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney to the people's House as he opened today's session with a prayer.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

(Ms. STEFANIK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, my district is the proud home to Adirondack Park, an environmental treasure. We understand in the north country that protecting our environment plays an important role in promoting economic growth and opportunity.

Along with 16 of my colleagues, I am proud to introduce a resolution calling on the House of Representatives to commit to working on economically viable solutions that address the threat of climate change.

Clean energy innovation is critical, and this resolution brings together the priority of addressing the risks of climate change with the importance of protecting and creating American jobs. This resolution calls on American ingenuity, innovation, and exceptionalism, also citing that it is a conservative principle to protect, conserve, and be good stewards of our environment.

No matter what side of the aisle you are on, we all have a significant responsibility to protect our environment from avoidable damage. I ask my colleagues to join in this commitment and support this important resolution.

#### RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1